



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-3873
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

WENDY L. WATANABE
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

MARIA M. OMS
CHIEF DEPUTY

ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

ROBERT A. DAVIS
JOHN NAIMO
JUDI E. THOMAS

July 7, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT - RANCHO SAN ANTONIO BOYS HOME, INC. - RANCHO SAN ANTONIO GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Rancho San Antonio Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Rancho San Antonio Boys Home, Inc. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department.

Rancho San Antonio Group Home is a 106-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, the Group Home was providing services for 95 Probation children, two Kern County children, two Ventura County children, and one Santa Barbara County child.

The Agency is located in the Fifth District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of our review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. In addition, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, employee records, a facility inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the

review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to address a few deficient areas. For example, the Group Home needs to develop and maintain comprehensive Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) that include short term goals that are specific, measurable and include input from all members of the treatment team including the child in the development of the NSPs. The Group Home also needs to maintain current court authorizations for all children taking psychotropic medications, allow children to attend religious services of their choice and encourage and assist all children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA:dl

Attachment

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Albert Ghirardelli, Board President, Rancho San Antonio Boys Home, Inc.
John Crowe, Chief Executive Officer, Rancho San Antonio Boys Home, Inc.
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Rancho San Antonio Boys Home, Inc.
Rancho San Antonio Group Home
Chatsworth, California 91311
License Number: 191202023
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Rancho San Antonio Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, TVs and DVD players. Books and resource materials, including computers with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendation

None.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Twenty-two

Comments:

The children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement and the case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current. However, the NSPs are not comprehensive, do not include short term goals that are measurable and specific, and all members of the treatment team including the child are not always included in the development and implementation of the NSPs.

Recommendations**1. Rancho San Antonio management:**

- a. Include input from all members of the treatment team including the child in the development and implementation of the Needs and Service Plans.
- b. Develop comprehensive Needs and Service Plans that include specific and measureable short term goals.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

Sample size: Twenty-two

Comments:

Children are attending school, are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendation

None.

IV. Recreation and Activities**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews****Sample size: Twenty-two****Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation**None.****V. Psychotropic Medication****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents****Comments:**

The children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist, are informed about their psychotropic medication, and are aware of their right to refuse medication. In addition, the medication distribution logs are properly maintained. However, the children do not have current court authorizations for the psychotropic medications that they are taking.

Recommendation

- 2. Rancho San Antonio management maintain current court authorizations for all children taking psychotropic medications.**

VI. Personal Rights**Method of assessment – Interviews with children****Sample size: Twenty-two****Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. Twenty-one children report they attend religious services of their choice. However, one child reports he is only allowed to attend Protestant services.

Recommendation

- 3. Rancho San Antonio management allow all children to attend religious services of their choice.**

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Twenty-two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, personal care items, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. The children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes and the clothing provided to the children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity. The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance and the children spend their allowances as they choose.

Generally, the Group Home encourages the children to create photo albums/life books. However, two children report that they are not encouraged or assisted in creating photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

- 4. Rancho San Antonio management encourage and assist all children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.**

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment - Review of relevant documents

Sample size for employee record evaluation: Seventy-five

Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

To: Attention Donald Luther, Group Home Auditor
Department of Auditor-Controller, World Trade Center
Children's Group Home Ombudsman Division
350 S. Figueroa St., 8th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90071
Phone: (213) 305.1283
FAX: (661) 252.0896

From: RANCHO SAN ANTONIO
21000 Plummer Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311
818-882.6400 ext 128

Re: Revised Auditor Controller Audit: Corrective Action Plan

Date: April 6, 2009

Program Service Section:

Recommendation:

1. Rancho San Antonio Management:
 - a) Include all members of the treatment team including the child in the development and implementation of Needs and Services Plan.
 - b) Develop comprehensive Needs and Service Plans that include individualized short term goals that are specific and measurable.
- a) Exit interview indicated that 14 out of 22 Needs and Service Plans do not contain documentation of PO's involvement as a member of the treatment team. All files had a copy of a request seeking verification of participation by PO's in planning. Prior to this auditing period the requests for verification had been accepted as the agency showing good faith efforts to comply with contract standards. This auditing period the auditor said that he had no proof the request had been mailed. Thus the requests now have a date mailed section on them to verify proof of our attempts at compliance. The auditor also stated that one Needs and Service Plan does not contain documentation from any member of a treatment team.

Status: Implemented. During the March 2009 audit the auditor was supplied with our verification of participation requests in addition to a memo written to Rancho social workers on 1-29-09 reviewing a new protocol for DPO sign off on treatment plans.

Plan to Prevent Reoccurrence:

Memo written to Rancho social workers on 1-29-09 reviewing a new protocol for DPO sign off on treatment plans:

Reminder for On-Site Protocol:

Since we are in constant communication with on site DPO's ...the following is the Rancho protocol for processing signature pages on Quarterly Reports as of January 26, 2009. From this date forward:

1. Social Workers continue to process reports as usual.

2. Elaine Watson shall make 2 copies of the signature page on reports RSA Clinical Director signs and approves.
3. Elaine will place report with double signature pages in on-site DPO's box.
4. On site PO's will sign duplicate signature page and return to RSA box labeled WATSON.
5. Elaine will file the original report and second signature page with DPO signature in client's file.

We communicate regularly with most off site DPO's and our policy is to make case planning collaborative. The problem is when reports are being processed PO's are not present. Our requests for verification of participation are being sent, but PO's generally do not return them. Please also make efforts to get off site signatures on your Needs and Service Plans, but do not hold up processing the report for signature.

Additionally, the following memo was sent to RSA social workers to meet contract compliance re: DPO participation:

The auditor has requested that we verify our attempts to engage Probation Officers as team members in case planning. In addition to our protocol for getting DPO participation and sign off on Needs and Service Plans please use the section (Address CSW/DPO contact with child over the last 3 months) in your Quarterly reports to report attempts to include DPO in case plan. For example: DPO was invited to family meetings, dates DPO and placement social worker collaborated and reviewed case plan are as follows: 12/1, 1/5 and 2/4. This was also reviewed in a Full Social Work Meeting on March 19, 2009.

Person responsible for implementing corrective action plan: Social Workers
Person Responsible for monitoring to ensure corrective action plan: Social Work Secretary and Clinical Director

One needs and service plan had no signatures (representing treatment team involvement) because original was not in main file and a computer generated copy was provided to the auditor as proof that report was completed. A report with signatures was placed on file the week of March 23, 2009. At time of the exit interview this was the only reference made to children not being involved in the plan.

Status: Implemented. A report with signatures was placed on file the week of March 23, 2009.

Plan to Prevent Reoccurrence: See above comment. Reason for original not being on file is unknown. Back-up reports are kept electronically and a copy of the electronically stored document was given to the auditor. This is an anomaly not a consistent problem. The Quarterly report protocol on file at the agency addresses all matters pertaining to Needs and Service Plans and Quarterly Reports.

Person responsible for implementing corrective action plan: Social Workers
Person Responsible for monitoring to ensure corrective action plan: Clinical Director

b) On 3-3-09 during audit auditor reviewed need for goals to include short and long term goals that are measurable.

Status: Implemented. During the audit we explained that in the format we used prior to 2007 Rancho had specific long and short term goals in each report. We shifted our report contents based on the new format that DCFS and Probation requires us to use now. The format does not direct the writer to complete both long and short term goals. Rancho added our previous style of goal completion (that passed audits previously) on to the goal section of the new format.

Plan to Prevent Reoccurrence: On March 19th a training regarding incorporating more detailed goals into the new Needs and Service/Quarterly Report format was conducted with all social work staff. Staff members were instructed to begin using revised goal development as of April 1, 2009. We discussed how to include our old style of goal development into the current form:

Sample of how to incorporate long and short term goals in new report format

ISSUE SUBSTANCE ABUSE:

Objectives/Activities:

Long Term Goal: *To help m. develop and maintain abstinence from substance use; explore the roots and patterns of resident's substance abuse; develop an understanding of the impact of drug abuse on health, social and family relations, and educational and vocational opportunities; develop life skills to cope effectively with stressors and problems without substance abuse; establish supportive relationships and connections to groups that will support and enhance ongoing recovery; and, develop an understanding of the pattern of relapse and strategies for coping.*

Short term goal/objectives: *Continue to attend NA/AA meetings, Relapse Prevention Group, complete Drug Education group and Life Skills class.*

(Short term objectives could also be practicing life skills of assertion, social connection in sober activities, etc... Another might be completion of two cognitive triple column worksheets per week to address all or nothing thinking that triggers use, etc...)

Projected Time Frame for Goal Completion: *Attending NA/AA meetings and Relapse Prevention group will be an ongoing goal for m. Youth shall complete Drug Education Group on June 26, 2009 and Life Skills on September 5, 2009.*

Barriers to reaching goal: *Drugs and alcohol in the community. (Another might be parental use/abuse of alcohol in the home or delinquent sibling in the home who would support using lifestyle...or ambivalence to disconnect from anti-social peer group that abuses substances...etc).*

Areas of strength that will assist minor reach goal: *M's completion of the Substance Abuse Education class and his openness to learn about recovery. (Another might be youth's motivation to change or youth's history of resilience, or parental support of sobriety, etc).*

Person responsible for implementing corrective action plan: Social Workers
Person responsible for monitoring to ensure corrective action plan: Clinical Director

Psychotropic Medication

Recommendation:

2. Rancho San Antonio management maintain current court authorizations for all children taking psychotropic medications.

Status: Implemented.

Plan to Prevent Reoccurrence:

2. Two (2) out of 22 files reviewed needed attention. One youth (GG) was taking Buspar that did not have a 'current' court authorization. The medication was ordered discontinued as of March, 5 2009. A second youth J.V. was also discontinued for Trazadone he was receiving. These two discontinue orders place Rancho in full compliance with psychotropic authorizations. Residential Director (R.D.) will review all PMA's to ensure proper follow through. Additionally R.D. shall track youth on medication and authorization requests and ensure proper follow through in this area.

Person responsible for implementing corrective action plan: Psychiatrist
Person Responsible for monitoring to ensure corrective action plan: Residential Director

Personal Rights:

Recommendation:

3. Rancho San Antonio management provide all children the ability to freely attend or not attend religious services of their choice.

Status: Implemented.

Plan to Prevent Reoccurrence:

Out of (22) children interviewed (1) one child was cited as having a concern regarding church service attendance. He was disciplined the day before the audit interview due to presenting negative behavior in the living unit. Prior to audit interview, the concern outlined in the monitoring report was never expressed by D. or his mother. D. stated to his social worker that the question asked was "do they make you go to church?" He stated yes. He was specifically asked by Trisha Yegazarian if he would prefer to attend values training. His response was outlined in an e-mail sent to me:

Hi Sharon,
I spoke with D. S. about church services. He states that he doesn't want to go to values and wants to continue attending church services
Thanks,

Trisha Yegazarian, MFT, San Juan Cottage, Senior Social Worker

Rancho has options that are reviewed with youth by staff as to our protocol re: attending a religious service or values training class. The youth (and his family) are consulted about church attendance and values training as programming options on Saturdays. The options had been reviewed with minor and once again reviewed after the audit. Plan to prevent reoccurrence is to sustain protocol to provide options of religious service and/or

values training as part of the youth's orientation to Rancho. Weekly scheduling includes all 3 options and this is viewed by all youth on a weekly basis.

Person responsible for implementing corrective action plan: PAC staff and dorm social worker

Person Responsible for monitoring to ensure corrective action plan: Program Director

Clothing and Allowance

Recommendation:

Rancho San Antonio management encourage and assist all children in creating and maintaining photo albums/Life books.

Status: Implemented.

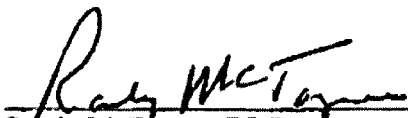
Plan to Prevent Reoccurrence:

Rancho complies with Life Book requirement by providing each youth with a handbook that includes Life Book pages. Initially, we understood that one minor's book had missing pages. The minor in question A.C. was seen by his social worker and asked if he wanted to create a Life Book. The minor replied, "No...I do not want to do one". He was issued a Handbook with Life Book pages on March 19, 2009. Later it was reported that a second minor indicated he was unaware of the Life Book. 20 out of 22 residents were aware of Life Book. The youth who indicated that they were unaware of Life book were given Student Handbooks with Life book pages and the concept of Life books were reviewed with the youth. The auditor reported to us that most youth shared that they prefer to use the inside of their locker area as a place to keep and view pictures and memorabilia. This practice is supported and is the common manner in which residents maintain a life board versus life book. As reviewed previously, Rancho reprinted our Hand Books in 2008 in order to add Life Book pages to be in compliance with both the letter of the contract and intent of the contract. Future residents shall receive Handbooks that include Life Book pages. PAC staff and Social Workers have been informed to explain Life Book pages and to continue to encourage youth to create positive memories by creating opportunities for pictures, and display of achievements, etc.

Person responsible for implementing corrective action plan: PAC Case Aid Dorm Social Workers

Person Responsible for monitoring to ensure corrective action plan: Clinical Director

Rancho San Antonio



Randy McTague, COO